



CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The center of Crown Point is its historic business district. A prominent “square” is the focal point on which is perched the former County Courthouse, now an active center of shops. Other shops, restaurants, and offices surround the Square creating a synergy that draws daily visitors and truly creates a central hub of activity.

While the active Downtown would be the envy of many cities, the City and business community realize that parking and traffic issues are limiting potential. As the area continues to grow in size and popularity, Downtown needs a plan of action to ensure it remains a vibrant business center.

This plan builds on previous efforts but with fresh and objective attention on vehicular circulation, parking, pedestrian environment, and urban design. The focus of the study is around the Courthouse Square, but the project study area boundaries extend to Robinson Court to the north, N. East Street to the east, W. Walnut Street to the south, and N. West Street to the west (see Figure 1).

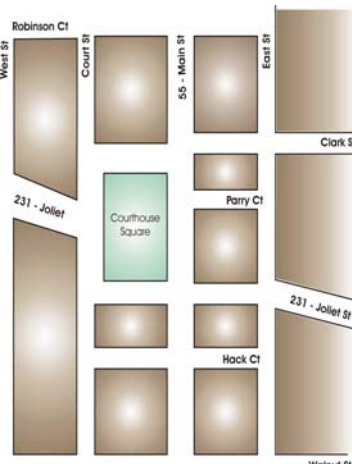


Figure 1: Study Area

Planning Process

The process to develop this plan began with the dedicated efforts of a Steering Committee comprised of Downtown representative business owners, members of local organizations, residents, and City staff. The City also retained a consultant team that included experts in urban design, landscape architecture, transportation planning, parking, traffic engineering, wayfinding, and economic development.

Several meetings were held with the Steering Committee to discuss issues, ideas, study objectives, priorities, and selection criteria for a desired, or preferred, alternative. Thereafter, the consulting team collected and reviewed the following data (see Appendix A and B):

- Existing traffic counts, signal timing, and circulation patterns.
- Three years of accident (crash) data indicating the type and location of traffic accidents.



- New peak hour intersection turning movement counts and pedestrian circulation counts were taken.
- Public parking (on-street and off-street) spaces were inventoried.
- Parking occupancy and turnover data was collected on a typical Tuesday and a Saturday to indicate the frequency of use and the length of time cars parked in each space.
- City and State policies and regulations that would have an impact on the design alternatives.

Once the data was collected and evaluated, the consultant team prepared several design alternatives for consideration by the Steering Committee. Based upon input received first from the Steering Committee and then at a public workshop, the alternatives were refined into one preferred alternative presented in this plan.

Summary of Vision and Objectives

The concept for future circulation, parking, and design improvements in the Downtown are summarized by the following Vision Statement and Plan Objectives:

Vision Statement: *Support the creation of a vibrant and economically successful Downtown through a safe and comfortable environment for vehicles and pedestrians.*

Circulation and Parking Objectives

- Retain and increase on-street parking near the Square.
- Improve walkability of Downtown.
- Reduce accidents and other traffic conflicts.
- Improve traffic flow within and through Downtown.

Urban Design Objectives

- Upgrade streetscape design elements to create interest and comfort.
- Create exclusive areas for public gatherings and pedestrians.
- Improve way-finding within the Downtown.
- Increase accessibility and upgrade the appearance of parking areas.



Plan Contents

With the foundation of a participatory planning process and Vision and Objective statements, this plan provides recommendations for circulation, parking, and urban design within Downtown Crown Point. Chapter 2 begins with a summary of key findings and a restatement of the circulation and parking objectives. The Chapter then describes the alternatives considered and the preferred alternative plan. The Chapter concludes with general circulation and parking recommendations that are policies and concepts the City could consider.

Chapter 3 is a comprehensive description of urban design improvements recommended to support the Vision and Objectives of this plan. These recommendations address pedestrian circulation, parking lot design, streetscape improvements, redevelopment in-fill opportunities, and signs.

Chapter 4 is a detailed Action Plan that outlines the next steps in realizing the vision of this plan. Project priorities are organized into short term, medium term, and long term timeframes.

An appendix is also provided that provides traffic data, parking data, and project cost estimates. There is also other data, available at the City offices, that was used in preparation of this document.